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SUBJECT: ROMANIA: 2006 COUNTRY TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 175925

¶1. This report provides Embassy Bucharest,s submission for the 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism.

¶2. Summary: Romania continued to be a staunch ally in the global war against terrorism, providing a full range of political, diplomatic, and military support for U.S. goals to combat international terrorism, while simultaneously improving its own national capacity. The Romanian government,s commitment to combat terrorism ranged from the deployment of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, to strengthening its counter terrorism doctrine and laws, and making counter-terrorism a fundamental component of its National Security Strategy. Romania hosted and participated in a wide range of regional and international initiatives to address terrorism and terrorism-related issues including terrorist financing. End Summary.

¶3. The government of Romania remains a staunch ally of the United States in the global war against terrorism, providing a full range of strategic and tactical support. In 2006, about 1,500 Romanian troops served in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of coalition and NATO efforts to combat terrorism and to deny terrorists operational and political opportunities. President Basescu in 2006 reaffirmed his commitment to keep Romanian troops in Iraq and Afghanistan for as long as they are needed. Romania made available its airspace, ground infrastructure, and naval facilities to support U.S. and NATO forces engaged in the global war against terrorism. The Romanian frigate "Regina Maria" deployed from September to November 2006, with NATO counter-terrorism forces in the Mediterranean Sea as part of Operation Active Endeavor.

¶4. The government of Romania strengthened its national policies as part of a strategic approach to combat terrorism. Romania included proactive language on counter-terrorism in its National Security Strategy, in its National Anti-Terrorism Strategy, and in guidelines for preventing and combating terrorist financing activities. Romania has ratified all UN counter-terrorism conventions, and is promoting other international and regional counter-terrorist initiatives and activities. Romania continued to promote the Bucharest-based South East Europe Cooperation Initiative (SECI), a regional center that provides law enforcement training and intelligence sharing to prevent trans-border criminal activities, including terrorist-related activities for the 12 member countries in South Eastern and Central Europe.

¶5. In April 2006, Romania hosted the first meeting of counter-terrorism chiefs within the framework of the Regional Conference of Interior Ministers under the Brdo Process (the Brdo process is a regional initiative involving Interior Ministries from Central and Southern European states). In October 2005, the Government of Romania released a list of

over 250 individuals and legal entities suspected of committing or financing terrorist acts. The 21 official agencies that form Romania's National System to Prevent and Combat Terrorism routinely update this list based on information from the UN Security Council. The list is compiled by the Ministry of Public Finance, which is responsible for monitoring and blocking the movement of terrorist funds.

¶6. The following chronicle highlights Romania's counter-terrorist activities in 2005-2006.

¶7. Since 2000, Romania's National Office for Preventing and Combating Money Laundering has concluded 33 bilateral cooperation agreements. In 2005, bilateral agreements were reached with Albania, Georgia, Colombia, Monaco, Portugal, Argentina, Estonia, Egypt, Republic of Moldova, Guatemala, Chile, and Latvia. In 2006, bilateral agreements were reached with Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg. Also in 2005, Romania's Financial Intelligence Unit exchanged data with counterparts in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Switzerland, Greece, Italy, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, U.K., Holland, Spain, U.S., Turkey, Hungary, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Colombia, Guernsey, Latvia, Slovakia, and Taiwan.

¶8. In March 2006, the Romanian Parliament ratified the Cooperation Agreement between Romania and Switzerland on fighting terrorism, organized crime, narcotics and other transnational crimes. The Romanian Parliament also in March enacted Law 36/2006 strengthening prevention and punishment provisions against terrorist financing and money laundering. The Romanian Parliament in October 2006 ratified the UN International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The Romanian Parliament in November 2006 ratified two Council of Europe Conventions related to counter-terrorism: the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and the Convention on Money Laundering, and the Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of Criminal Proceeds.

¶9. In June 2006, a Romanian citizen, Ioan Les, was detained by Romanian intelligence agents near the town of Buzias in Western Romania, for allegedly planning an act of terrorism. According to Romanian authorities, the suspect was arrested in transit to Timisoara, where he planned to use a remote control device to blow up a car in the city center. The suspect told investigators that his motive was to force Romania to withdraw its troops from Iraq. Investigators linked the suspect to a Bosnia-based terrorist network. The Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) placed Les under surveillance for several months after he allegedly made several threats via the internet threats to various entities, including CNN and Al-Jazeera television stations. Les was charged under a 29-day preventive arrest warrant.

¶10. Omar Hayssam, a businessman with strong connections both with the Arab world and the now-in-opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD) was arrested on terrorism-related charges in 2005 for his involvement in the abduction of three Romanian journalists and another businessman in Iraq. Though prohibited from leaving the country, Hayssam fled Romania for Syria on June 30, 2006, following his conditional April release on medical grounds. As a result of the ensuing public scandal, the General Prosecutor, the Police Information Service chief, and both Internal and External Intelligence chiefs resigned.

¶11. On November 13, 2006, four Romanian-Muslim citizens were arrested in Iasi under suspicion of supporting Middle Eastern terrorist groups. The four allegedly belonged to the "Muslim Brothers," an Al Qaeda-related terrorist cell.

¶12. On November 14, 2006, an Iraqi citizen Shaker A. Shaker was arrested in Bacau under suspicion of terrorist-related activities. Romanian Intelligence Services had evidence that Shaker possessed a false passport, and that his real name was in fact Mahmoud Chaker, a former Iraqi Embassy diplomat. Shaker had been deported previously from Romania in 2003,

along with 40 other Iraqi citizens, for planning terrorist attacks against Israeli interests in Bucharest.
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